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THE FORMS IN THE FIRE.

BY HENRY O. WATSON.

Last night I sat within my room,
The flame blazed higher and higher,
The cold wind whistled and roared without,
So closer I drew to the fire.
And soon I grew quite cosy and warm,
And smiled in contentment and cheer—
But a thought came o'er of the suffering poor
And I sorrow'd that coal was so dear.

The flame no longer blazed cheerily,
Each fork seemed tipped with blood—
In each blazing depth of the fierce bright fire
A shivering creature stood.
I could not turn my eyes away,
Away from each shuddering frame,
The warm blood chill'd then quickly thrill'd
Like the burning blush of shame.

A vision came o'er my waking sense,
A vision of sorrow and death;
The tears flowed down from my burning eyes,
And wild sobs chok'd my breath.
In a little room, in a narrow street,
Away up toward the sky—
I saw a wretched human soul
Lay her adown to die.

Lay her adown to die alone
On the cold and naked floor;
The white snow whirled through the broken
panes,
And piled up against the door.
And every wind that followed the snow,
Went through her like a dart,
And she drew her rags more closely round,
But they could not warm her heart.

Poverty, want, hunger and cold,
And a hopeless, grim despair,
Had eaten into that human soul
And left it starving there!
Never a friend to close her eyes,
Nor list to her hunger-cry,
Alone in darkness, with only God
To see her starve and die?

Now hungering eyes glared out at me
From many a ghastly face,—
A thousand mutely pleading souls
Running starvation's race!
And then I felt that solemn fact
Which erst I deemed was cant,
That here, in the midst of untold wealth
The poor do die of want!

Out of the weird shapes in the fire
Saw I this vision clear,
And I thought if all would give their mite
What matter if bread is dear?
And I vow'd a vow in my innermost heart,
If heaven my life should spare—
That henceforth the wealth I now trifled away,
The suffering poor should share!

A new artistic journal published at Milan has
been born, having for title *Il Teatro Italiano*.

MATTERS THEATRIC.

The re-appearance of Mr. J. W. Wallack, at Wallack's Theatre, on Monday evening of this week was signalized by the production of a clever translation, by Mr. A. W. Young, of Victorien Sardou's comedy of "Nos Bons Villageois," under the title of "A Dangerous Game." Mr. Young has performed his task well, and gives an exceedingly clever translation, the dialogue in parts being really powerful, and the play well constructed throughout. The first two acts drag somewhat, but after that the interest is admirably kept up, and the situations are dramatic to the last degree.

The plot of the play is briefly this: Baron de Villepreux (Mr. Wallack) has married a young and lovely wife, Pauline, (Mrs. Clara Jennings) and loves her with all the traditional passion of stage husbands; during a journey in the Pyrennes, Madame has encountered a certain M. Henri Morisson (Mr. Robinson) who has formed a desperate attachment for the young bride, using as a cloak for his advances, the lady's sister Genevieve (Miss Henriques). Madame is true to her marriage vows, however, and does not encourage the young gentleman in the slightest degree, on the contrary, after writing to him several letters, begging him to desist in his attentions, incontinently flees and returns to the arms of her husband. This brings us to the pretty little village, with an unpronounceable name, of which the husband of Madame is the Mayor, and whither Madame has flown to escape the persecutions of Master Henri, and where Master Henri has deluded his venerable parent to purchase a country residence. Madame grants the young scapegrace an interview, and once more implores him to banish this unholy passion from his heart, and at the same time return her letters; he wavers, but at last promises to accede to her wishes, and return the letters on the following night. Meanwhile, he meets Miss Genevieve, and determines that, after all, she is the one he really ought to love, so having made up his mind in this respectable way, he goes to the chateau in the evening and pays that young lady a visit, asking her hand, telling her of his unbounded affection, and indulging in all those other little idiosyncracies for which lovers are famous. Miss Genevieve becomes alarmed, however, being alone in the house, the rest of the inmates having gone to a village *fete*, and requests Master Henri to take his departure. Master Henri yields at last, but "the course of true love, &c.," for the young lover is seen by some of the villagers, who mistake him for a thief, and pursue him through the grounds. Fearing capture, he again rushes into the house, and discovering Madame, implores her to save him. Madame is, of course, alarmed, in fact, quite distracted, dreading the jealousy and anger of her husband—time presses, something must be done—a brilliant thought strikes our hero, seizing the diamond necklace of Madame, he endeavors to rush from the room, but is stopped by the Baron and his retainers, when he declares himself to be a thief, and begs for mercy. The honor of Madame is saved, but Henri is branded as a thief.

The truth comes out, however, during the suc-

ceeding examination, and the Baron discovers to his horror what he supposes to be the infidelity of his wife. Prayers, entreaties, and explanations are useless, the Baron is inexorable, and informs Henri that one or the other of them must die—a duel is arranged, and Monsieur le Baron is about proceeding with loaded pistols to encounter his adversary when he is met by Genevieve, just returned from the village ball, who, in a fit of confidence, imparts to him the visit of Henri, his love for her and her love for him, and in conclusion demands the consent of the Baron to their marriage. This, of course, puts a different face on matters, everything is admirably settled, and the "Dangerous Game" is successfully played. Love, as a matter of course, having held all the trump cards.

The part of the Baron, although, not showing Mr. Wallack's capabilities to the best advantage, is admirably played, quiet, natural, gentlemanly and, in the latter scenes, rising to a dignity of passion, which is really superb. Mr. Wallack gives us a picture of the high-toned gentleman, which is in every way delightful.

Mr. Robinson's *Henri* is excellent, showing a greater depth of passion than we have yet had from him, while Mr. Gilbert's *Mons. Morisson*, and Mr. Holland's *Gringoire* are, as is everything these gentlemen do, masterpieces. Mr. Young's *Floûpin* too, demands great praise.

Among the ladies of the play, Miss Henriques bears off the palm, her Genevieve being a perfectly delicious piece of *naïve*, piquant acting. Mrs. Jennings is too stilted and stagey as the Baroness to make her performance of that part altogether satisfactory.

The play is beautifully put upon the stage, the first scene being particularly striking. Here we have a finely painted landscape, with a river of real water flowing in the foreground, bordered with rushes, flowers, grassy banks, and everything that will render it natural and pleasing to the eye; here the Baron and his friends exercise their qualities as disciples of old Izaak Walton, and in the sight of the audience catch what look very much like genuine *bona fide* fish.

With all these various attractions, it is to be hoped and expected that the production of "A Dangerous Game," will, from a managerial point of view, prove to be no such thing.

SHUGGE.

WOLFSOHN'S BEETHOVEN MATINEES.—Mr. Carl Wolfsohn will give his Seventh Beethoven Matinee, at Steinway Rooms, on Friday the 18th inst., at three o'clock, on which occasion he will interpret three of the great Sonatas of the immortal Beethoven. As this series of Beethoven Matinees draws to a close, public interest in them seems to increase, for there was a larger attendance at the last, than at any of the previous matinees. A sure proof that Mr. Wolfsohn has thoroughly interested his subscribers.

The French Minister of the Interior has authorized all the theatres to give masked or fancy balls during the carnival. Hitherto the practice was only to allow the privilege to the French and Italian operas and the Opera Comique.